Setting up of National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority

681. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are setting up a National Biotechnology Regulatary Authority to bring all agencies under one umbrella and introducing the idea of a "Conflict of Interest Agreement" with all stakeholders on decision making bodies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the present status thereof, case-wise?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Sir, the Task Force on "Applications of Agricultural Biotechnology" set up in May, 2004 by the Ministry of Agriculture has suggested for setting up of an autonomous statutory National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority (NBRA) with two separate wings- one for agricultural and food biotechnology and the other for medical and pharmaceutical biotechnology. The idea of a "Conflict of Interest Agreement" does not appear to be relevant in this context and is not part of the recommendations. The report of the Task Force has opined the NBRA is essential for generating necessary public, political, professional and commercial confidence in the science based regulatory mechanism in place in the country. Subsequently, the Draft National Biotechnology Development Strategy of the Department of Biotechnology has also endorsed it.

(c) The Ministry of Agriculture has mooted a Note for the Cabinet during April, 2006 for setting up of National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority after detailed discussion in the Committee of Secretaries (CoS).

Development of seeds for crops

†682. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether G.M. (genetically modified) seeds for crops are being developed;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.